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One man's long journey — From a one-world crusade to the 'department of dirty tricks'

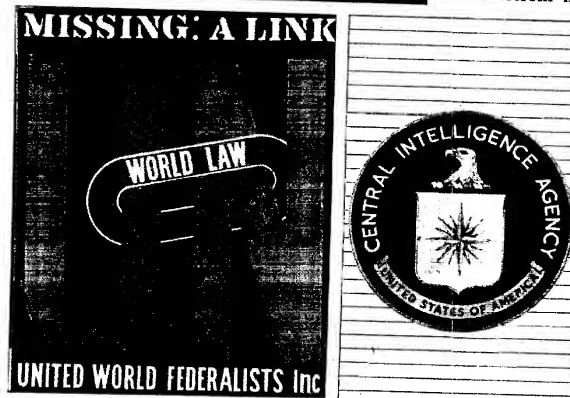
By Merle Miller

What if he should get out of his hole and explain the matter reasonably to both sides? "Fellow human beings," he would begin. "There are very few of us here who in private life would kill a man for any reason whatever. The fact that guns have been placed in our hands and some of us wear one uniform and some another is no excuse for the mass murder we are about to commit. There are differences between us, I know, but none of them worth the death of one man. Most of us are not here by our own choice. We were taken from our peaceful lives and told to fight for reasons we cannot understand. Surely we have far more in common than that which temporarily separates us. Fathers, go back to your children, who are in need of you. Husbands, go back to your young wives, who cry in the night and count the anxious days. Farmers, return to your fields, where the grain rots and the house slides into ruin. The only certain fruit of this insanity will be the rotting bodies upon which the sun will impartially shine tomorrow. Let us throw down these guns that we hate. With the morning we shall go together and in charity and hope build a new life and a new world."

—FROM "WAVES OF DARKNESS" BY CORD MEYER JR.

I first read "Waves of Darkness," the only published fiction by Cord Meyer Jr., in the fall of 1945, and I thought that it was one of the best—maybe the best—short pieces of writing that had thus far come out of the war. A few months later, on a gentle spring evening in 1946 (everything and everybody was gentler in those days), I heard Meyer speak. I took voluminous notes, so I know that he said, in part: "World government is possible. It is possible in our lifetime. We can and we will make it happen, and by so doing we shall achieve peace not only for our children but for our children's children, a peace that will survive to the end of time. . . . Those who wrap the skirts of nationalism around themselves are living in the dangerous past, and we cannot be satisfied with that because it has produced the present. . . ."

There was a standing ovation for Meyer at the end of his speech; I remember that, and later that night in my journal I put down some of what he had said and added: "... No one of my generation—at least no one I have heard or heard of—is as



Lieut. Cord Meyer Jr. with his bride, Mary, in 1945; at bottom, a U.W.F. poster and the C.I.A. seal, emblems of his career.

passionate and persuasive a speaker as Cord Meyer. To listen to him you think that anything is possible, including world government. Not only that he writes beautifully, damn it. . . . If Cord goes into politics he'll probably not only be President of the United States; he may be the first president of the parliament of man. And if he becomes a writer, he's sure to win the Nobel Prize. At least."

The years passed; we heard that after retiring from the World Federalist crusade Cord had gone into the C.I.A., but in those days, the early nineteen-fifties, that was a respectable—even an admirable—thing for a liberal and humane man to do. It was necessary to keep the agency out of the hands of the reactionaries, and some years later didn't McGeorge Bundy, then himself still a knight in fairly shining armor, say that there were more

liberal intellectuals in the C.I.A. than any place else in Government? And hadn't he named Meyer as one of the best examples?

True, in 1967, when it was revealed that Meyer was in charge of covertly funding such organizations as the National Student Association and publications like *Encounter*, some people, myself included, were upset at the deception and hypocrisy involved, but at least the money had gone to organizations more or less on the non-Communist left, and the main criticism, in the beginning anyway, had come from the most reactionary members of Congress, not the liberals.

But then last summer—it was a season of heart-break—Meyer went into the offices of Harper & Row to ask, among others, his old ally of the world government movement, Cass Canfield, to let the C.I.A. see the galley of a book called "The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia." The book claimed

that the C.I.A. had more than a little to do with the traffic in narcotics in Southeast Asia. Publishing it might, Meyer said, be against the best interests of this country; what's more, the book was very likely full of inaccuracies and was possibly libelous as well.

After a monumentally uninspired exchange of letters between Harper & Row and various faceless individuals in the C.I.A.—Meyer surfaced only once later, to say that he had never intended "suppressing" the book—the publisher agreed that the agency could take a look at the galley, but did not, to be sure, promise to make any changes.

The galley was supinely dispatched to Washington, where some presumably literate person or persons, no doubt including Meyer, read them, and a week or so later the request for changes arrived back at the offices of Harper & Row. The writer's editor, Elisabeth Jakob, said that they were "laughably pathetic," and having read them in *The New York Review of Books*, I am inclined to think that she was being kind. The suggestions, and they were meager indeed, had to do with the public image of the C.I.A. rather than anything remotely consequential. Harper & Row at last decided that "the best service we can render the author, the C.I.A. and the general public is to publish the book as expeditiously as possible."

How intrepid.

Anyway, the book was published intact in mid-September; it got long and generally laudatory reviews, and it has since sold reasonably well, although it has yet to show up on anybody's best-seller list. Nor has it caused any great cry for investigation.

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Merle Miller's most recent novel is "What Happened." He is currently working on a nonfiction book about Marshalltown, Iowa.

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Cord Meyer

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tigation or legislation. The republic appears to remain more or less intact, and so does the C.I.A., and despite the fact that President Nixon repeatedly declared war against it during the fall campaign, the drug traffic appears to be flourishing in Southeast Asia and everywhere else in the world.

Still, as the writer, a 27-year-old Yale graduate student named Alfred W. McCoy, later said: "...submitting the raw manuscript to the C.I.A. for prior review is to take the first step toward abandoning the First Amendment protection against prior censorship."

Of course it is. But publishing houses have not generally been noted for their courage, although James H. Silberman, editor in chief of Random House, has twice turned down similar requests from the C.I.A., on the sensible ground that he had no right to do anything else, that a book belongs to the writer, not the publisher.

The whole thing, was, to put it gently, sleazy, but it was not surprising. Of course the C.I.A. would try to—well, not censor books. After all, there are a lot of present and former members of the American Civil Liberties Union in that mausoleum in McLean, Va. No, not censor, just make publishers a little more timid the next time a book on the agency comes along. If it does come along. The agency some time earlier got an injunction against the publication of an unwritten book that was to have been by Victor L. Marchetti, a former agent who had signed some sort of agreement promising not to kiss and tell. As if some of the liveliest and most important books in all of literature weren't by gossip folk who did just that.

You know the only astounding thing about the whole affair? That Cord Meyer Jr. was the man to make the request. Not to be believed. I couldn't help wondering what would have happened if I had suggested such an unlikely scene to Cord at the time I knew him, more than 20 years ago. I think I know. I think he would have dismissed it as preposterous.

It happened, though, and I wondered why. Such things

can never really be explained. They can only be guessed at, wondered about, investigated, analyzed. When early in November I went to Washington to talk to some people who were Meyer's friends in the old days and some who are his friends now (in general, the two are not the same) one man who had not seen him for 15 years said, "The man who wrote 'Waves of Darkness' must have died a little the day he walked into Harper & Row, assuming there is any of that man still left in Cord."

Meyer wrote of the death of the youngest marine in a machine-gun platoon: "An unreasoning indignation shook him against all who had placed Everett where he lay. For the frightened enemy that shot Everett and was probably already dead he had only pity. 'But I wish,' he thought, 'that all those in power, countrymen and enemy alike, who decided for war, all those who profit by it, lay dead with their wealth and their honors and that Everett stood upright again with his life before him.'"

CORD and his twin brother, Quentin, were born on Nov. 20, 1920, in Washington, D.C. Their father, a well-to-do real-estate developer with an impressive sense of noblesse oblige, was in the diplomatic corps, and in the first four years of the twins' lives, Cord Sr. was stationed in Cuba, Italy and Sweden.

When a second set of twins was born, Thomas D. and William B., the parents decided that the family was too large for moving around. Cord Sr. retired from the corps, and they settled in New York, first in a brownstone on the East Side of Manhattan, then at various watering spots on Long Island. Later, they moved to Little Boars Head, N.H., where Cord's mother, the former Katharine Blair Thaw, still spends her summers. She spends her winters in Naples, Fla. She is 79 and a gracious and still socially active woman. The Thaws were just as well-off and just as social, both in New York and in Washington, as the Meyers. Altogether, Cord's antecedents could not have been more WASP-ish, more proper, more secure.

A woman who once saw the family quite often told me, "It was a happy household, assuming anybody from the outside can ever tell a thing like that. They were civilized people, witty; everybody laughed a lot, and there was certainly never any worry about money, not even in the depths of the Depression." Cord Jr.'s great-grandfather had made a considerable fortune as cofounder of a huge sugar refinery; his grandfather had been state chairman of the Democratic party and had added to the family fortune by developing huge tracts of land on Long Island, a project in which Cord Sr. and his brothers joined. "Cord's childhood was very well-ordered, and all four boys, Cord perhaps more than the others, grew up with the kind of manners that people who are not of that class find arrogant. Quentin was gentler than Cord. They were not identical twins, but I think that they were as close as two brothers could possibly be."

Quentin and Cord went to St. Paul's, and they both played hockey and played it well, although Quentin was the better athlete. Cord was the brain, the intellectual, and at Yale (naturally it was Yale) he edited the literary magazine, was Scroll and Key and Phi Beta Kappa; he was graduated *summa cum laude*.

Because of the wartime academic speed-up, the Yale class of 1943 was graduated in December, 1942, and Cord, who had finished the academic requirements a semester before that so that he could enlist in the Marine Corps, returned to New Haven from officers' candidate school in Quantico, Va., for the commencement.

President Charles Seymour, his voice shaking with emotion, announced that in addition to all his other honors Cord had won the Alpheus Henry Snow award as "the senior adjudged by the faculty to have done most for Yale by inspiring his classmates." Meyer, very tall and fair and handsome in his dress blues, received what no doubt was his first standing ovation; it seemed that the applause would never die down, that the cheering would never stop. And there was not a dry eye in the house. People tend to get very emotional during a war, particularly at the beginning. Very emotional things are said, too. President Seymour told the graduates that they must "...save our na-

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A man who was there that day said recently, "We all knew whom Seymour had in mind to lead that battle; the rest of us would willingly, you might say worshipfully, be Cord's lieutenants in the fight."

In the next two and a half years Cord Meyer Jr. became a first lieutenant, made a combat landing on an obscure Pacific atoll called Eniwetok, and in late July, 1944, he and his machine-gun platoon landed on Guam. That night, a Japanese grenade rolled into his foxhole and exploded. He was severely burned and, among other wounds, he lost an eye.

Describing the harrowing night that followed, he wrote in "Waves of Darkness": "There was no hatred in his heart against anyone, but rather pity. . . . It would have been better for man, he felt, if he had been given no trace of gentleness, no desire for goodness, no capacity for love. Those qualities were all he valued but he could see they were the pleasant illusions of children. With them men hoped, struggled pitifully, and were totally defeated by an alien universe in which they wandered as unwanted strangers. Without them, an animal, man might happily eat, reproduce, and die, one with what is."

From July, 1944, until January, 1945, Meyer was in various naval hospitals in the Pacific and in the States; then he was discharged from the Brooklyn Navy Yard, with a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. As for his future, he had written his parents some months before: "I really think, if possible, I should like to make a life's work of doing what little I can in the problems of international cooperation. No matter how small a contribution I should happen to make, it would be in the right direction. We cannot continue to make a shambles of this world, and already a blind man can see the shortsighted decisions that point inevitably to that ultimate Armageddon."

In April of that year, Cord married Mary Eno Pinchot, whom he had first met before the war while he was still a student at Yale and she was at Vassar. In her way, Mary Eno Pinchot was really quite as golden as he. She had been one of the prettiest, most popular and most brilliant members of the class of '42. She was the niece of Gifford Pinchot, the former Governor

Reflection on death



"I wish," he thought, "that all those in power, countrymen and enemy alike, who decided for war, all those who profit by it, lay dead with their wealth and their honors and that Everett stood upright again with his life before him." So wrote Meyer on the death of a young marine in "Waves of Darkness." Above, a marine lies as he fell at Iwo Jima.

of Pennsylvania and one of the founders of the conservation movement, an ecologist before most people had ever heard the word. Her father, Amos Pinchot, had been one of the founders of Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose Progressive party. Mary herself was a painter and a good one. She had been a reporter for the United Press and was a contributor to various magazines. She, like Cord, was a committed liberal, a crusader for newer, braver worlds.

The wedding was one of the social events of the season, and it was not surprising that such a prestigious ceremony should be presided over by the Rev. Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, who was then surely the most prestigious Protestant clergyman in America. Also not surprisingly, after a brief stay in New Haven, where Meyer studied law, he went off to San Francisco, where he was one of the two veterans who served as aides to Comdr. Harold Stassen, a United States delegate at the drafting of the United Nations Charter.

About that time, Cord found out that Quentin had been killed during the awful battle for Okinawa. A friend said, "Cord has always been very contained, but you could see that he suffered greatly from Quentin's death. They were,

after all, twins, and loving twins. . . . It was as if Cord felt that part of himself had gone. . . . And he was more than ever determined to spend the rest of his life as a crusader for peace. As he wrote in that letter to his parents, 'If there be a God may He give us all the strength and the vision that we so badly need.'"

In San Francisco, Meyer met, among others, Charles G. Bolte, a young Dartmouth graduate who had fought with the British Army and lost a leg at Alamein. Bolte was chairman and one of the founders of an evangelical new organization, the American Veterans Committee, which was once and for all going to put an end to such power-grabbing, self-seeking organizations as the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

To be sure, Bolte and Meyer left San Francisco disillusioned. What they had seen was not the making of a forceful new organization that could keep the peace; the U.N. was, they felt, no better than the League of Nations had been, perhaps not even as good. When Meyer heard the heads of the various delegations mumbling their nationalistic platitudes, he compared them to "a group of priests going mechanically

through the ritual of a religion in which no one any longer believes."

The only answer — how could people have been so blind? — was a world government, a supranational organization with the power to enforce the peace. Meyer wrote later in his book "Peace or Anarchy": "I left San Francisco, with the conviction that World War III was inevitable if the U.N. was not substantially strengthened in the near future."

"Then the annihilation of Hiroshima suddenly proclaimed that peace was no longer merely desirable but absolutely necessary to the survival of a large proportion of the human race. . . . This book . . . is based on the conviction that we, the survivors of two world wars, stumble toward a more massive disaster not through any general failure of moral intention but driven by the nature of the archaic institutions that we have the capacity to change."

Neither Bolte nor Meyer was much surprised by what had happened at San Francisco. What did one expect of old men? Not a single delegate had been under 30. In those days, those of us who were under 30 — the ones who counted, anyway, the shakers and movers, anyway — were

allegorically all Seabees, whose slogan in the Pacific had been, "The difficult we do immediately; the impossible takes a little longer." And at the time that slogan applied not only to the building of air strips; it was, to us, true for the whole of the world.

Although Meyer and I had both been on Eniwetok at the same time in the spring of 1944, we had not met, what with one thing and another. Our first encounter was hardly historic, but what then was not historic? It was at a meeting of the National Planning Committee of A.V.C., shortly after the first time I heard him speak on that night in 1946.

The N.P.C. was an impressive group; at least we impressed each other, and we were forever being interviewed and photographed, and we were always identified as "the leaders of tomorrow"; I for one never doubted it.

We included Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr., Oren Root Jr., who almost alone had been responsible for Wendell Willkie's nomination for the Presidency at the Republican National Convention in 1940; Gil Harrison, who was to become editor-in-chief of The New Republic; Michael Straight, who was then editor of The New Republic and is now assistant to Nancy Hanks on the National Endowment for the Arts; G. Mennen (Soapy) Williams, who was to become Governor of Michigan and during Jack Kennedy's thousand days an Assistant Secretary of State; Robert Nathan, the economist who was an adviser to Franklin D. Roosevelt Sr. and other Presidents, and more recently to George McGovern; and Cord Meyer Jr.

John F. Kennedy had been asked to join us, but he declined; later he said that people like us and like those in Americans for Democratic Action made him uncomfortable. There was some talk of asking Ronald Reagan, but that suggestion was turned down on the grounds, as I recall, that Reagan's tenure as president of the Screen Actors' Guild indicated that he was not only unstable but possibly too radical as well.

But Meyer, it was generally agreed, was the most outstanding, the most promising. He was certainly the most obsessed with the urgency of our obligation to remake the world in our own image. It had taken God six days and

six nights to finish the job in the first place. But did we have that long?

Meyer, who was indefatigable (did he ever sleep?), was impatient with those who thought that creating a world government might take as long as a year, say. He had arrived at an intellectual position. World government was necessary; it was logical, and anybody who couldn't see that was either stupid or venal or both. He did not suffer fools gladly; he didn't suffer them at all.

REMEMBERING those days and nights — N.P.C. meetings always lasted into the early morning—one participant said recently, "There was always a streak of fanaticism in Cord, surprising in a sense because people in that class are seldom fanatic. Though perhaps that is too strong a word. You can with safety say that Cord was always dogmatic."

But he was right, too, and almost everybody in the American Veterans Committee agreed with him—agreed with him, that is, until the early autumn of 1946, when our membership started growing with amazing rapidity. We were delighted. Despite the hostility—or was it only indifference?—of the press and the media generally, we were, or we thought we were, finally catching on. New members were joining up at the rate of hundreds a month, especially in the large cities and particularly in New York. I remember someone, possibly me, saying, "It just goes to show you how truth and justice prevail if you work hard enough."

Then, I forget how, but it was probably by reading The Daily Worker, we discovered that the American Communists had finally abandoned their plans to infiltrate the American Legion and had decided that it would be easier simply to take over the A.V.C.

After that, every meeting was a battleground; the climax came at the second national convention, in Milwaukee in 1947. Debate was angry on all the resolutions, but the Communists' main energy seemed focused, understandably, on foreign policy, and Meyer was head of that committee. What turned out to be a majority of us were for the abolition of the veto in the U.N. Security Council. The Soviet Union opposed abolition, of course, and so, to be sure, did the American Communists. The committee meeting on foreign

policy, one of the longest and angriest I ever attended, didn't end until after 7 A.M.

Meyer was a brilliant but acerbic chairman, a master of "Robert's Rules," and the plank of the platform for which he was largely responsible was eventually approved, but the victory seemed to give him no satisfaction. He continued to brood over the fact that during the battle he had been called a great many unpleasant names by the Communists, among them a phrase picked up, I believe, from Izvestia, describing him as "the fig leaf of American imperialism." Some said that maybe he had never been called a name before; I don't know.

In any event, after the triumph in Milwaukee, almost everybody's interest in A.V.C. seemed to dwindle, as if meetings weren't as much fun once the Communists had been defeated. In addition, veterans by now had jobs and added family responsibilities to worry about. The membership stopped growing, then started to drop off.

But Meyer did not abandon his crusade for world government. His book, "Peace or Anarchy," most of which he wrote while a Lowell Fellow at Harvard, was published in October, 1947, and Meyer became president of several smaller world-government groups that were brought together as United World Federalists. That year, too, the Junior Chamber of Commerce chose him as one of the 10 outstanding young men in the United States; most of the other names mean little now, with the possible exception of "Richard M. Nixon, 34, of Whittier, Calif., Congressman." Meyer was chosen as the outstanding young man of 1947 by the Young Men's Board of Trade of New York City.

From 1947 to 1949, he traveled more than 40,000 miles, giving an average of seven speeches a week, and the paid-up membership of United World Federalists grew from 20,000 members to 47,000. At times, as many as 151 Congressmen were said to be committed to the cause and preparing bills on the subject; I believe one or two actually were introduced. Although the word was not yet in much use in the late nineteen-forties, Cord Meyer Jr. was certainly the guru of the youthful left.

He was something of a romantic figure, too. On campuses all across the country

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girls in dormitories and sororities pinned his picture above their beds. His lectures were enthusiastically attended, and the standing ovations continued. The ovations were not due to Meyer's eloquence; as a matter of fact, he talked too fast, sometimes running the words together so that they were indistinguishable. His voice was monotonous, and the only gesture he ever seemed to allow himself was the chopping right arm that emphasized a point, the same gesture John F. Kennedy made even more familiar a few years later.

But in Meyer's case eloquence wasn't necessary; he so clearly believed every word he said that the effect was messianic. "There is no safe and simple way of stepping out of the suspicious world of the present into the hopeful future. . . . We must take chances, and we must do it now. No one dare concede defeat until the first bombs fall, but everyone must realize the inestimable value of the time that remains. What is possible today may be impossible tomorrow. . . ."

Meyer often said that if world government had not been achieved by 1951 he was going to take Mary and their two sons, Quentin and Michael, to Africa to live among the Pygmies. It was difficult to tell whether or not Cord was joking, and those who know him now say that it still is: "He looks at you with that glassy eye and never cracks a smile, and you never can be sure if he's serious."

Charles Bartlett, the Washington columnist who was a classmate of Meyer's at Yale and is still a close friend and fellow tennis player, says, "Cord is really a very funny man. He has great humor, but it is not slapstick humor. It is very sophisticated; he draws on soft irony, you might say."

In any case, world government was not achieved by 1951; one former associate said, "The cause was a stalled bus then, and it has remained stalled, despite the fact that Norman Cousins, when he is not otherwise occupied, does from time to time issue a manifesto on the subject." So in 1951, after another two years at Harvard, where Meyer earned a degree in political economy, he went to Washington, and, largely at the urging of Allen W. Dulles, who became the director in 1953, joined the Central Intelligence Agency. He became an

assistant to Thomas Braden, an old friend of the A.V.C. days, in that department in charge of the secret funding of non-Communist left publications and organizations around the world.

What turned out to be the Watergate scandal of 1967 seemed in 1951 to be a progressive and imaginative thing to do. How else, for instance, was Radio Free Europe to survive? The R.F.E. advertising campaign—it still goes on—didn't raise enough money to pay for the ads themselves. And as for the National Student Association, the student leaders themselves, after being roundly defeated by Communist forces at one international youth rally after another, went to various Government organizations to get up money to send more and more eloquent spokesmen to such gatherings. It is said that only the C.I.A. came up with the money.

IT is difficult and maybe impossible to recreate the atmosphere of a period, but in 1950 even a man like William Sloane Coffin Jr., who was to become Chaplain of Yale and a co-defendant with Dr. Benjamin Spock in what was to be called the draft conspiracy trial, joined the agency. He later told Jessica Mitford, "Stalin made Hitler look like a Boy Scout. I was very strongly anti-Soviet. . . . When I graduated from Yale in 1949, I was thinking of going into the C.I.A., but I went into the seminary instead. After a year at the Union Theological Seminary, when war with the Soviet Union seemed to be threatening, I quit to go into the C.I.A., hoping to be useful in the war effort."

With all those liberals streaming in—many of them surely pro-Communist if not actually members of the party, and a suspicious number of them limp-wristed, if not provable homosexuals—it is little wonder that Senator Joseph McCarthy, having finished his demoralization of the State Department, claimed to have evidence of ". . . Communist infiltration and corruption and [emphasis mine] dishonesty" in the agency. He threatened a public investigation but, apparently persuaded by Vice President Nixon, he agreed to call it off "in the interests of national security."

At the same time, however, he insisted on an internal purge, and Cord Meyer Jr. was one of the first victims. Apart from the fact that he

had been an "admitted world Federalist," the charges against him were, as was the custom of the day, vague and unsubstantiated. The F.B.I. eagerly produced a derogatory dossier on Meyer charging, among other things, that he had "knowingly associated with Communists."

That was true enough. At one time during his tenure on the National Planning Committee of the A.V.C. seven of the 20 members were either Communists or close sympathizers, and Meyer sat around the table with them at various meetings in New York, Chicago, Washington and other cities. Meyer fought the Communists on almost every issue, and usually won.

No matter. In the early nineteen-fifties such subtleties were of no importance, and shortly after the Meyer dossier was received, he was suspended from the agency without pay. For the next three and a half months, he and his lawyer prepared a brief of several hundred pages, answering every charge, even the most ridiculous. During that time he read Kafka's "The Trial," and he has been heard to say that only during such a crisis can a man read the novel and properly understand it. In any case, on Thanksgiving Day, 1953, Allen Dulles called Meyer to say that his brief had been judged satisfactory, that the charges against him had been dropped, and that he could return to work the following Monday.

It wasn't really over, though; it is never really over. No one who underwent such an investigation, public or private, will ever be quite the same again. It still hurts on a rainy day, and sometimes when the sun is at its highest and brightest. The internal black-and-blue marks never completely disappear.

Those who knew Meyer best during those terrifying three and a half months say that the experience left him bitter and that he withdrew even further inside himself. He is also said to have moved further to the right politically, as many of McCarthy's victims did, to protect themselves from another such burning.

And then in 1959 one of Meyer's sons, aged 9, ran into the street in front of the Georgetown house, was run over by a car and killed instantly. "That was a great tragedy to both Cord and Mary. Such a thing can either make or break a marriage. In their case it broke it."

They were divorced some

months later, and on a clear, cool morning in October, 1964, while she was walking on the old Chesapeake and Ohio Canal towpath near her home in Georgetown, Mary Pinchot Meyer was shot and killed. The towpath, which ran parallel to the Potomac, was one on which Mary and her friend Jacqueline Kennedy had often walked together in those simpler, happier days when Mrs. Kennedy was First Lady. The man accused of Mrs. Meyer's murder was eventually acquitted, and some blame the acquittal on the liberalized rulings on criminal justice issued by the Warren Court. That, too, people say, has caused Meyer to move farther to the right politically and further embittered him.

A WASHINGTON newspaperman who has known Meyer socially for some time, though not well, says, "Cord is a guy who, whatever the reason, is very twisted up inside himself. He is terribly on nerve ends—at all times, it seems. . . . Tragedy seems always to have hovered around his head. That may in part, possibly in large part, be the reason for his cynicism, his skepticism. He is a very truculent man, especially when he's been drinking, and I cannot imagine having a relaxed, moderate discussion with him about anything at all."

On the other hand, Charles Bartlett, who knows Meyer perhaps better than any other man, says, "Cord is a very frank guy. When he doesn't agree with somebody he says so. There is nothing namby-pamby about him, and he takes his work with the C.I.A. as a full commitment. But I definitely do not think of him as a tragic person, and he doesn't think of himself in that way. . . . True, he won't talk about his work with outsiders, but with other people in the agency, and people in the agency tend to associate with each other, he is absolutely charming. He plays a wicked game of tennis, is a marvelous shot, despite the eye; he's a movie and a modern-art buff, and he reads everything."

There is, however, no doubt that Meyer is not an easy man. In his book about Washington, "The Center," Stewart Alsop, whose view of the C.I.A. could certainly be called respectful if not, at times, downright worshipful, wrote of Meyer that he is ". . . a bright but rebarbative man, with a certain genius for making enemies."

A woman who was Meyer's occasional companion after his divorce and before his second marriage remembers that she gave a dinner party at which he was a guest. "He was not at all the calm and collected sort of person that I thought an official of the C.I.A. would be. He got so furious at something that happened—I don't remember what—that he got up and left the dinner. . . . I thought he would have made a marvelous minister; he seemed to have such an evangelical feeling about things."

In 1967, when it was revealed that Meyer was the man in charge of the covert funding, Ramparts magazine, which first printed the story, rejected the arguments of leaders of the N.S.A. that any revelations would hurt the "enlightened, liberal internationalist wing of the C.I.A." Ramparts declared that such an argument was only another indication of "how deeply the corruption of means for ends has become engrained in our society and how much dishonesty is tolerated in the name of the cold war."

After that, it was fashionable, and almost mandatory in certain circles of the left, to condemn the C.I.A. Even those in literary circles who had once felt neglected and naked if they weren't asked to fly off, first class, to some distant, perhaps romantic, spot to pick up a little information for the agency and get a nice sun tan now claimed that they had been hoodwinked. Although they had all been over 21, usually a lot over 21, they knew not what they did. Anyway, they were sorry and would make fools and villains of those who had recruited them in the first place.

A Washington newspaperman who covered that event and what followed says, "One sure result of the whole thing was that now in addition to godless Communism it takes very little to get Cord started on the subject of the press and the media generally, and although he is perhaps more articulate than Ted Agnew, he sounds very much like him, although perhaps Cord is harsher."

Many people feel that Meyer's second marriage, to the former Starkey Anderson, has been a mellowing influence. She was once an assistant to Roger L. Stevens, chairman of the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, and now is in the White House as Leonard Garment's assistant.

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